

ICSE Paper 2010

ENGLISH-I

Question 1.

(Do not spend more than 35 minutes on this question.)

[25]

Write a composition (350-400 words) on any one of the following :

- (a) *Think of a time when you achieved a personal goal. Say why the goal was important to you and how you achieved it. Describe how you felt on achieving it.*
- (b) *"More lessons are learnt on the sports field than in the classroom". Express your views either for or against this statement.*
- (c) *A school carnival or fete is a great occasion for fun with friends. Describe one such event in your school.*
- (d) *Write an original story, beginning with the following line :
The water was cold. I took a deep breath and jumped.....*
- (e) *Study the picture given below. Write a story or a description or an account of what it suggests to you. Your composition may be about the subject of the picture or you may take suggestions from it; however, there must be a clear connection between the picture and your composition.*



Answer.

- (a) "Your garden looks like a jungle." Aren't you tired of looking at this mass of weeds?" These were the novel comments of anyone who happened to visit my 20 feet by 30 feet patch of land which we called our garden. I was tired of these sharp and hurting remarks. I decided that enough was enough. My summer break was just round the corner. This time I was not

heading towards any hill station therefore the two month stretch seemed like an ideal time to do-up my patch of weeds. It was a challenge I had given to myself and I was sure that I would be able to achieve it with a little help from an early monsoon.

I set about hiring a part time gardener. Our first task was a mammoth one. Old dried up trees and bushes had to be uprooted. Their roots had grown deep and needed much effort to be pulled out. Next came the thorny shrubs, nettles and the wild growth which had spread its tentacles all over.

The next task was to plough the entire stretch of land. We set about with spades and other digging equipment. It took about a week to clear the entire mass of weeds. Then came the turn to add fertilizers to the barren ground. I took some expert help to procure a mix of artificial and natural manure. Spraying of pesticide had also to be done to keep the termites away.

As if on use, there was an unexpected rain-shower on the 8th day. Even God was blessing me with my efforts. When the earth became softer, we decided to begin with landscaping the garden.

We collected round-white stones from the neighbourhood. A mound of earth about four feet in height was made at the Northern most corner of the garden. Four steps in a circular pattern were made and then they were lined with these round-white stores. We then chose a colour-scheme of evergreens in which the tallest plant would be on the top and the others in a descending order. We took care to plant only evergreens. I then began my frequent trips to the nursery to procure some seasonal plants. I also favoured some creepers to climb upon the brick wall and also to hang down from the porch.

The third week was an unfortunate one as my part-time gardener had to leave. Nevertheless, fired by my new found enthusiasm I persisted. New pots of various shapes and sizes were bought. Flowers as well as the studies varieties of crotons, money- plant, dianthus, coleus, were planted. The softest variety of grass had to be planted.

Then began the constant watering, weeding and pruning. So excited was I that every-morning I woke up at five put on my shorts and picked up my weeder to be in my special place, my garden.

The goal was important to me as I wanted to show everyone that I too had green-fingers, I too was a home-maker who could maintain a lovely garden. Now I felt a glow of satisfaction spreading through me as I watched my labour of love in full blown.

- (b) I do agree wholeheartedly that more lessons are learnt on the sports field than in the class room. If you consider deeply the sportsfield is a mini field of life. Whatever we experience or learn here serve to be invaluable experiences to us for life.

Let's begin with an invaluable adage of life "practice makes a man perfect". This holds true for the sportsfield. The more you practice, the better athlete you will become whether it is sprinting or hurdle-racing or slow cycling, skating, javelin throwing, discus or shot put throws nothing makes a person better than practice, constant practice makes us better swimmers, badminton players, hockey, throw ball and chess experts.

The next invaluable lesson to be learnt is team-work. There are many sporting events in which your winning and losing depends upon the entire team. Haven't we seen cricket and basket-ball teams in despair even after the brilliant performance of a few individuals ? We learn not only to bring out the best in

ourselves but in others as well. We realise that inter-personal motivation, support and encouragement are essential for the best performance.

Life teaches us that "failures are stepping stones to success." The same is true with the sport-field. Here too one failure does not mean absolute doom. It simply gives us the courage to rise and fight again. Perhaps failure makes us tougher for the next round of fight. How often have we seen those who failed to win in a race succeeding the second or the third time ?

The class-room does not prepare us for split second decisions. I refer to a recent IPL match. The decision taken by a fielder in the cricket-field was awesome. While watching a game of cricket the fielder on the boundary live jumped up to prevent an obvious six. He then hit it back inside the line and then caught it. Thus a six was converted into a catch. These hair-splitting decisions cannot be taken in the class-room.

The sports field also teaches us how to be a true sportsman or a sportswoman. What is sportsmanship ? It is fair play which is based on just and impartial decisions. It is also something which teaches us to lose gracefully without cursing or complaining. It is better to be a good loser than a bad winner.

The sports field also teaches us that only the best and the deserving win. It is rarely that things happen by fluke on the sports field. Only if you are a good sprinter can you win the race. "javelin, higher, stronger" is the motto of the Olympic games and it also holds true in real life that the fittest survives.

Thus in so many ways the education we receive and the lessons we learn on the sportsfield are more than those we learn in our class rooms.

- (c) We have not had a school fete for the past five years. So when our Principal announced that this winter we were to have a grand fete, the announcement was received with an enthusiastic and supportive round of applause by all students. After a month of planning and organising the D-day, 18th of December finally arrived. The entire school campus beginning from the gate, the long passage-way, the fete-grounds were all decorated brilliantly. There were multi-coloured festoons, banners, flags, tents all over the place. As soon as we entered the main gate, our mood got uplifted to the lively music being played all around.

I along with my friends, my classmates, was given the duty of taking charge of the Request Counter. Since we were in Std. XII, this privilege was given to us. We had to keep ready a list of 200 songs which would be played for all moods and feelings. Whoever came to us had to deposit Rs. 10 and give us a message of about two lines and pick out a song from our list. Our stall was a massive hit and later on when we made our profit calculations, we learnt that we the second highest grossers of the fete, the lead being taken by a popular gaming stall.

Friends chatted, met other boys and girls from schools and colleges all over town. The usual "no entry" shackle was thrown to the winds as we mingled freely and happily. Students look forward to such occasion when there is optimum chance to meet other friends in a fun-filled lively atmosphere. The game-stalls like Lucky Seven Under Seven, Lucky Dip, Hoopla, Rolling nine-pins, one minute games were very popular with the youth. The children loved the joy rides even elephant and camel rides. The antics of students dressed up like cartoon characters were appreciated by all. Of course there were times when accidents happened; Micky Mouse's left ear came off and Rudolf the reindeer's red nose tumbled down while the Power puff girls got engaged in

their own power struggle. However apart from this minor misadventures all sailed well.

People were seen laughing, chatting, relaxing at various spots of the fete. There was an atmosphere of gaiety and enjoyment. The St. Patrick's "Rendezvous 2010" was a runaway success.

Such events bring back memories of years gone by. There were hordes of ex-students who became nostalgic and went down memory lane. They remembered their old pranks, their silly capers, their favourite teachers, their exapades.

Of course the next day was a tough one. Lots of cleaning up, tabulating accounts, handing over the profits etc. Collecting left-over prizes, coupons, brochures etc. The fete was also an interesting learning experience for all of us. There were many silent students who hardly come out of their shell but given specific duties and responsibilities they handled them very well. We will cherish memories of the school fete for years to come. Indeed it was a great occasion for fun with friends.

- (d) The water was cold, I took a deep breath and jumped. There was no alternative, the police with their sniffer dogs were close on my heels. It was a very complicated case. They were mistaking me for my twin brother.

I wished I hadn't broken into this mad run. I wish I would have had the courage to stay back and explain. But then who was listening? Did the Sub Inspector have patience to listen to me? As I tried to swim across the ice-cold water, needles of shivering cold darted across my limbs. If I stayed too long in the water I would freeze. But on the other hand if I remained behind the ferocious Alsations would rip me apart.

It all began just a week ago. My twin brother Nitish ran a auto- spare parts shop. He was a hard-working man but somehow with the passage of years he had fallen into bad company. Daily gambling sessions and drinking were the preludes to frequent fights. This spare-parts shop became the venue for his group of notorious friends to gather together.

They would begin with exchanging news and gossip. However as the drinking proceeded they became more excitable and irritable. Whoever won in the gambling rounds would become elated where those who lost lost their cool. On Friday the 15th of March as they sat gambling my brother was in an exceptionally good mood. He had been winning practically all rounds, the loser for the day was Dinesh. When his supply of money was exhausted, he began to play with tokens which were to be encashed later. When the last round of cards got over Dinesh owed Rs. 1600 to my brother. As promised Dinesh was to go home and get the money immediately. He however did not want to pay up. My brother insisted but Dinesh desisted. An angry quarrel broke out. Unfortunately I entered at that in auspicious moment. What happened then is a blur now because it happened at such great speed. Nitish pushed Dinesh over and over again and finally began to beat him. I tried to intervene pulling away the cast iron rod with which he was beating.

Suddenly there was the blaring of police sirens and I was caught holding the non-bar in my hand. The others fled quickly and the police began to approach me. I broke into a run. I ran as fast as my legs could carry me, not passing, not thinking. But now that I have crossed the river and run safely on the other side of the river-bank. I have now decided to go to the nearest police station and tell them the truth, the whole incident as it actually happened. I am sure that the truth and nothing but the truth will set me free.

- (e) We had enjoyed an evening out. My examinations were over and my family and I had gone out for a long drive to the suburban part of the town. On our return we found a large crowd gathered outside our colony, I wondered what was attracting the people?

I elbowed my way through the crowd to see a young girl about six or seven years of age walking over a tight rope balancing a wooden pole measuring about ten to twelve feet long. There was a young man with a harmonium belting out a rustic song as the child walked precariously over the rope. A brightly dressed woman stood watching cautious and concerned of the child may not fall off. May be she was that girl's mother.

What made these people risk the young girl's life? What would happen if she fell down? Would she be maimed for life? Will she get crippled? A dozen questions like these darted through my mind. I felt sympathy for the poor children who had to risk their life to earn their livelihood.

I also thought of the hundreds of children who were child-labourers. Many worked in hazardous factories like glass factories and chemical industries. One careless movement could ruin their lives forever. I thought of the long hours of work for those under fourteen children who worked in road-side dhabas, tea-shops and carpet weaving factories where they laboured day after day unflinchingly and uncomplainingly. When I drive out of my multi-storeyed apartments I often happen to see a bunch of ten to fifteen children across the road. There are new apartments coming up just before my building. The ages of these children range from a few months to fourteen-fifteen years. All of them are ragged, ill-dad, hungry and dirty. While their parents work they have to tend for themselves.

The labourers children hung around the building sites, often exposed to all the dangers which an unfinished structure can cause. These children have never known the care-free, happy feeling of childhood. They have never been pampered by their parents or spoilt by riches. They lead modest hard-working lives, maturing much earlier than their actual years.

They are almost young adults who can shoulder the responsibility of earning daily wages, looking after their younger brothers and sisters and helping out their parents on fields, in building, in domestic work as well.

I do hope that a day will come when childhood would turn a blessing to these children rather than a curse.

Question 2.

(Do not spend more than 20 minutes on this question.)
Select one of the following :

- (a) Your class was taken to visit an Old Age Home where you spent half a day with the residents. Write a letter to a friend telling him/her what you saw, how you felt and in what way you have changed since the visit. [10]
- (b) Write a letter to the Director of a television channel complaining about the quality of the programmes telecast. Suggest ways to improve the programmes.

Answer.

- (a) 26, Kailash Colony,
Agra : 282003

3rd March, 2010

My dear Anubha,

I hope this letter finds you in good cheer. I haven't heard from you since long and I do wish you would keep in touch.

Anubha I would like to share with you a recent experience of mine. Our Class, Std. XB, was taken to visit an Old Age Home where we spent half a day interacting with the residents.

We went there in a picnic mood thinking that we would quickly distribute the sarees, shawls, footwear, toiletry, eatables and medicines and then proceed to have fun.

However what actually happened was very different. The poignant faces of women aged seventy five to ninety kept us rivetted to the place much longer than we had intended to stay. Some of them were so lonely that they caught hold of our hands, cajoling and persuading us to spend some more time with them.

Some talked of their children and grand children whose faces they had forgotten for they never came to visit them. Some talked with nostalgia about their own school and college days when they were of our age. They remembered those happy days and how naughty they themselves had been. We had prepared some songs for them which they enjoyed very much. A handful of them even joined us in the singing disregarding their cracked, out of tune voices.

They looked at us with such fondness and affection that we decided to stay there as long as possible. It was much later we realized how we felt and how something, within us had changed forever. I felt truly happy and satisfied that we had done something worthwhile. I also felt that what we had done that day was a generous and magnanimous gesture. We had come out of our selfish selves and extended a helping hand to those who most deserved it.

Now I will look at old people not with impatience and irritation but in a more understanding and mature manner. I will now empathise better with them.

Do convey my regards to uncle and Aunty. Reply soon as I will wait anxiously for your letter.

Your loving friend,

Aastha

(b) 36-D, Kamla Nagar

Agra : 282004

3rd March, 2010

The Director

Star Plus

142, Lokhandwala

Mumbai

Dear Sir,

Subject : Deteriorating Quality of Television Shows.

I am a regular viewer of your channel and it pains me to say that the quality of the serials and other programmes shown on Star Plus has taken a steep dip.

There are many aspects of a programme which have to be taken into account. According to me the morals, values and ethics depicted in your serials are very inappropriate. The spouses are unfaithful to their partners. Often there are

many illicit relationships and children born of such relationships resurface somewhere during the serial. This is done to provide a new and exciting twist to the story line but have you ever thought of the millions of T.V. viewers who are held captive for that one hour with eyes glued to every twist and turn of the story. When the children of the house begin to comment "Ankush is her child from her earlier lover" or "Bindu's ex-husband is creating problems" then we know what corroded value systems we are handing over to our children.

The vamp of the story has a powerful role and youngsters are inspired to use filthy language, scheming and plotting against your own family-members. Besides this degradation of values too much of wealth and opulence teaches the youngsters to acquire quick wealth through fair or foul means.

T.V. Programmes should have a good script which sustains our interest. It should not encourage wrong values and outdated thinking. They should not be based on divisions between castes, communities, economic sections etc. Please do include some healthy and informative programmes to boost your TRP ratings.

With sincere thanks,

Yours faithfully,

Aman Srivastava

Question 3.

Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions that follow :

They pass me everyday, on their way to school—boys and girls from the surrounding villagers and the outskirts of the hill station. There are no school buses plying for these children : they walk.

For many of them, it's a very long walk to school.

Ranbir, who is ten, has to climb the mountain from his village, four miles distant and two thousand feet below the town level. He comes in all weathers, wearing the same pair of cheap shoes until they have almost fallen apart.

Ranbir is a cheerful soul. He waves to me whenever he sees me at my window. Sometimes he brings me cucumbers from his father's field. I pay him for the cucumbers; he uses the money for books or for small things needed at home.

Many of the children are like Ranbir—poor, but slightly better off than what their parents were at the same age. They cannot attend the expensive residential and private schools that abound here, but must go to the government aided schools with only basic facilities. Not many of their parents managed to go to school. They spent their lives working in the fields or delivering milk in the hill station. The lucky ones got into the army. Perhaps Ranbir will do something different when he grows up.

He has yet to see a train but he sees planes flying over the mountains almost every day.

"How far can a plane go?" he asks.

"All over the world," I tell him. "Thousands of miles in a day. You can go almost anywhere."

"I'll go round the world one day," he vows. "I'll buy a plane and go everywhere!"

And may be he will. He has a determined chin and a **defiant** look in his eye. Up to a few years ago, very few girls in the hills or in the villages of India went to school. They helped in the home until they were old enough to be married,

which wasn't very old. But there are now just as many girls as there are boys going to school.

Bindra is something of an extrovert—confident fourteen year old who chatters away as she hurries down the road with her companions. Her father is a forest guard and knows me quite well : I meet him on my walks through the deodar woods behind Landour. And I had grown used to seeing Bindra almost every day. When she did not put in an appearance for a week. I asked her brother if anything was wrong.

"Oh, nothing," he says, "she is helping my mother cut grass.

Soon the monsoon will end and the grass will dry up. So we cut it now and store it for the cows in winter."

"And why aren't you cutting grass too?"

"Oh, I have a cricket match today," he says, and hurries away to join his team-mates. Unlike his sister, he puts pleasure before work!

Cricket, once the game of the elite has become the game of the masses. On any holiday, in any part of this vast country, groups of boys can be seen making their way to the nearest field, or open patch of land, with bat, ball and any other cricketing gear that they can cobble together. Watching some of them play; I am amazed at the quality of talent, at the finesse with which they bat or bowl. Some of the local teams are as good, if not better, than any from the private schools, where there are better facilities. But boys from these poor or lower middle-class families will never get the exposure that is necessary to bring them to the attention of those who select state or national teams. They will never get near enough to the men of influence and power. They must continue to play for the love of the game, or watch their more fortunate heroes' exploits on television.

- (a) Give the meanings of the following words as used in the passage :

One word answers or short phrases will be accepted.

(i) defiant (line 24)

(ii) elite (line 41)

(iii) exposure (line 48)

[3]

- (b) Answer the following questions briefly in your own words :

(i) In what way are the children better off than their parents ?

[2]

(ii) What was Ranbir's ambition ?

[2]

(iii) How has the fate of girls changed ?

[2]

(iv) In what way was her brother different from Bindra ?

[2]

(v) Why is the narrator amazed ?

[2]

(vi) Why does the author call the heroes on television 'fortunate' ?

[2]

- (c) In not more than 60 words, relate what difficulties the children face in their daily lives. How does the author feel about it ?

[8]

- (d) Give a title to your summary in 3(c). State a reason to justify your choice.

[2]

Answer.

- (a) (i) Challenging/confident/bold.

(ii) Upper classes/rich and educated people

(iii) Chance to play with experienced players.

- (b) (i) The children of the mountains are better off than their parents as they at least go to the government schools while their parents had not attended any school.

(ii) Ranbir's ambition was to buy a plane and go all over the world, flying in it. The planes flying over the mountains fascinated him and he too wanted to travel in them.

- (iii) The fate of the girls in these mountains has changed. Till a few years back, very few girls in the hills or in the villages went to school. They helped at home till they were old enough to be married but now a proportionate number of girls and boys went to school.
- (iv) Bindra's brother was different from her as he gave more importance to pleasure than that to work. While Bindra helped her mother to cut grass, her brother played cricket.
- (v) The narrator is amazed at the quality of talent which the village boys display while playing cricket. He also admires the finesse with which they bat or bowl.
- (vi) The author calls the horses on television "fortunate" because they have been selected for the Indian cricket team and are now professionals earning substantial sums of money.
- (c) The village children have no school buses hence they walk long distances to school. Some are too poor to afford proper shoes. They work in fields and deliver milk. Girls did not attend school earlier being confined to household jobs. The boys who play cricket will never get enough exposure or opportunities to get to the state or national teams.

- (d) "Lives of village children" is the title. I have chosen for my summary as the entire passage revolves around their daily life, their aspirations and their hardships. (60 words)

Question 4.

- (a) In the following passage, fill in each of the numbered blanks with the correct form of the word given in brackets. Do not copy the passage, but write in correct serial order the word or phrase appropriate to the blank space. [4]
Example : (0) given.

But just when I had almost (0) (give) up hope, I was (1) (strike) with a brilliant idea : my birthday was due fairly soon, and if I (2) (deal) with the family skillfully, I (3) (feel) sure, I could not only get a boat but a lot of other equipment as well. I (4) (suggest) to the family that, instead of (5) (let) them choose my presents, I (6) (may) tell them the things that I (7) (want) most. In this way they could be sure of not (8) (disappoint) me.

- (b) Fill in the blanks with appropriate words :

- (i) I refrained telling Reeta the truth. [4]
(ii) The leader counted the cooperation of his colleagues.
(iii) The public was cautioned pickpockets.
(iv) Janaki escorted her daughter to the cinema theatre as she was anxious her safety.
(v) Their path was beset difficulties yet they succeeded.
(vi) The mouse crept stealthily the cheese.
(vii) It was good you to invite Sheila for the picnic.
(viii) Smoking public places is now banned.

- (c) Join the following sentences to make one complete sentence without using *and*, *but* or *so* : [4]

- (i) You will surely be late. Hurry up!
- (ii) The trekkers got lost due to the heavy fog. They had misplaced their map as well.
- (iii) She has to apologize. He will not meet her again if she does not do so.
- (iv) I wear this expensive outfit very sparingly. I bought it last month.

- (d) Re-write the following sentences according to the instructions given after each. Make other changes that may be necessary, but do not change the meaning of each sentence. [8]

- (i) Unless Ria takes care of her health, she will not be able to look after her family.
(Begin : Ria must)
- (ii) His arrogance was the cause of his losing the election.
(Rewrite the sentence using "arrogant")
- (iii) If you are not a member you cannot borrow books.
(Begin : Only)
- (iv) It is a pity our vacation is not longer.
(Begin : I wish)
- (v) Raju did not complete the exercise on time.
(Rewrite the sentence adding a question tag)
- (vi) Rohan was so terrified of being left alone in the house that he started screaming.
(Begin : So)
- (vii) The teacher asked, "How many of you think the answer is correct ?"
(Rewrite the sentence using indirect speech)
- (viii) Sunil is the fastest runner in the school.
(End : as Sunil).

Answer.

- | | | | | |
|-----|------------|--------------|---------------|-------------------|
| (a) | 1. struck | 2. dealt | 3. felt | 4. suggested |
| | 5. letting | 6. might | 7. wanted | 8. disappointing. |
| (b) | (i) from | (ii) upon/on | (iii) against | (iv) about |
| | (v) with | (vi) towards | (vii) of | (viii) in |
- (c)
- (i) Hurry up or you will surely be late;
 - (ii) Not only did the trekkers get lost due to the heavy fog but also misplaced their map.
 - (iii) He will not meet her again if she does not apologize.
 - (iv) I wear this expensive outfit which I bought last month very sparingly.
- (d)
- (i) Ria must take care of her health in order to be able to look after her family.
 - (ii) As he was arrogant, he lost the election.
 - (iii) Only if you are a member can you borrow books.
 - (iv) I wish our vacation was longer.
 - (v) Raju did not complete the exercise on time, did he ?
 - (vi) So terrified was Rohan of being left alone in the house that he started screaming.
 - (vii) The teacher asked us how many of us thought the answer was correct.
 - (viii) No runner in the school is as fast as Sunil.